

Summary of Proposed Research Program for Doctor of Philosophy

**1. Thesis Title**

Impact Assessment of Poverty Alleviation Strategies on Rural Women: Case Studies from Jamaica

**2. Abstract**

This thesis addresses the question, have poverty alleviation strategies been effective in positively transforming the lives of poor rural women in Jamaica? I examine this question by conducting a detailed assessment of a World Bank project entitled "Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI)". This poverty alleviation project will be assessed within the broader context of rural poverty from the perspective of rural women and the framework of poverty alleviation policies in Jamaica. This research seeks to assess the intended and unintended outcomes of this project based on evidence outlined in the literature that rural women have diverse priorities, strategies and concepts of empowerment which they use to address multiple dimensions of poverty to lead the kind of lives they value and have reason to value.

Amartya Sen's Capability Approach will be used to develop indicators of social, economic, physical and psychological capabilities of rural women in Jamaica. The research argues that these capabilities are fundamental to poverty alleviation based on the lived realities of rural women and the level of underdevelopment in rural areas in Jamaica. Poverty alleviation policies help to determine the outcomes and impact of projects and programs on the poor. The policy process will be critically examined, from a feminist perspective, to identify how it enabled or disabled the enhancement of the four capabilities of rural women.

The study will employ the mixed-method research design. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions will be conducted with a selected sample of female participants of the REDI project. Purposive sampling technique will be used to select the sample of rural women. Also, in-depth interviews will be conducted with REDI project personnel and World Bank officers for the purpose of triangulation. In Jamaica and the Caribbean, there is a dearth of academic literature, on the impact of poverty alleviation strategies and livelihood approaches of rural women. This study will provide new information on rural women and poverty in the context of Jamaica and has implications for public policy.

**3. Objectives**

3.1 The impetus for this research is the desire to answer the following key question:

- a) Have poverty alleviation strategies of the government been effective positively transforming the lives of rural women in Jamaica?

3.2 The following subsidiary questions ensue from the key question:

- a) *How do rural women define and experience poverty?*
- b) Do the current definitions and indicators of poverty capture the situation in rural spaces in Jamaica?
- c) How did REDI impact the social, economic, physical and psychological capabilities of poor rural women?
- d) What model of public policy informed the implementation of REDI and how did it shape the outcomes of the project?
- e) What are some of the lessons learnt from this project?

3.3 The central objectives of this research project are to:

- a) *Provide a deeper understanding of rural poverty from the perspective and experience of rural women in Jamaica;*
- b) Assess the impact of the project on the social, economic, physical and psychological dimensions of poverty for rural women in Jamaica; and
- c) Critically examine the policy process, regarding the implementation of the REDI project.

## **4. Background**

### *4.1 Context: Historical Overview of Rural Development in Jamaica*

Jamaica is one of thirteen independent islands in the Caribbean and is the largest English-speaking island with a population of 2.71 million (Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2013). Jamaica is recognised for its stable system of government and high human development (United Nations Development Programme, 2013). The population is almost equally divided by sex - males accounting for 49 per cent and females for 51 per cent and region - 54 per cent in urban areas and 46 per cent in rural areas, (Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2013). The living conditions, however, indicate high levels of gender and regional inequalities (Bailey, 2004, Bailey and Ricketts, 2003, Benfield, 2008, Crichlow, 2005, Henry-Lee, 2001, Seguino, 2003).

Over the past 30 years, improvement in living conditions has been steady but uneven for most Jamaicans (Planning Institute of Jamaica and Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2008, Planning Institute of Jamaica and Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2009b, Planning Institute of Jamaica and Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2010, Planning Institute of Jamaica and Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2012, Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2004). According to the latest Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions (JSLC, 2010), social and economic development has been uneven, with evidence of more underdevelopment in rural areas than in urban areas (Planning Institute of Jamaica and Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2012, Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2004). The assessment by Henry-Lee (2001) of poverty dynamics in Jamaica asserts that rural residents are disadvantaged and marginalized. The disadvantage experienced by rural Jamaicans was further explained and substantiated by (Crichlow, 2005) in a review of rural policies pursued in Jamaica over a period of more than 150 years.

The JSLC (2010) provides evidence of social and economic deprivations that are contributing to underdevelopment in rural areas in Jamaica. These multiple deprivations include highest incidence of poverty; low levels of educational attainment; low income earning capability; lack of economic opportunities; largest proportion of poor female-headed households; poorest housing conditions; largest proportion of individuals who are unable to afford and access health care services; and the smallest proportion of households with access to reliable and clean sources of water (Planning Institute of Jamaica and Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2012). Crime and violence are usually presented as threats to the safety and security of persons and properties in urban towns and cities (Henry-Lee, 2001, United Nations Development Programme, 2013, United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2007, World Bank, 2004, Harriott, 2000, Moser and Holland, 1997). But the fact that all parishes in Jamaica are affected by major crimes, such as murder, shooting, rape, sexual intercourse with a person under 16, robbery, break-in and larceny (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2013, United Nations Development Programme, 2013), indicate the need to examine their impact on living conditions in rural areas.

In addition, there are structural and environmental forms of deprivation that continue to impede human development in rural Jamaica. These include the inability to access basic social services; poor social and economic infrastructure; lack of coordinated institutional arrangements to address poverty; poor environmental practices; high susceptibility to climate change as well as high levels of vulnerability to natural hazards due to the country's location in the Atlantic Ocean hurricane belt (United Nations Development Programme, 2013, Dunn, 2013, Trotz and Lindo, 2013). These forms

of deprivation are viewed as major factors contributing to inter-generational and persistent poverty in rural Jamaica (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2012). But although rural development is being stymied by social, economic, structural and environmental forms of deprivation, poverty is still narrowly defined and measured as the monetary value of consumption (Benfield, 2010, Planning Institute of Jamaica and Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2012). This indicates a critical gap in the definition and measurement of poverty in Jamaica.

Since 1989, high incidence of poverty continues to be a challenge for the rural population in Jamaica (Planning Institute of Jamaica and Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2012, 2009, 2008, 2006). The female-headed household, which is the largest household composition in Jamaica (47.2 per cent) and in rural areas (48 per cent), accounts for more than half the number of poor in the poorest and second poorest quintiles for the past 10 years (Planning Institute of Jamaica and Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2012, 2009, 2008). This complex structure of gender, poverty and rural underdevelopment has not received much attention in the Jamaican context (Innerarity, 2003). Rather, the focus has often been an interrogation of gender inequality and development at the national level from the perspective of women as passive recipients with little or no impact on the structures of inequality (Bailey, 2004, Bailey and Ricketts, 2003, Seguino, 2003). But this emphasised femininity is only one perspective of the Jamaican women's experience and does not represent the full picture of women's lived reality in Jamaica and especially in rural areas. The 'other' un-emphasised femininity where she is head of her household (Planning Institute of Jamaica and Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2012) and the 'rebel woman' (Mathurin Mair, 2006, 1995) who "cradled the family, reshaping it to ensure its survival, [and] redefined it to include not only kinship relations, but also friendship networks that function as a unit, providing economic, social and psychological support" (Wint and Dunn, 1997) is silent or silenced in most recent academic literature.

From a neo-liberal development perspective, the values of this un-emphasised femininity are often viewed as a paradox. Seguino (2003) presents changes in economic development policies as both a restriction to women's labour force participation and an obstacle to their livelihood. She further provided evidence from Jamaica demonstrating that women's unemployment rate was twice that of men (Seguino, 2003) as an indicator of the severity of the challenge. But formal employment is not their only source of livelihood. Torero et al. (2006) reveals that women in Jamaica accounted for 57 per cent of workers in the informal sector, which is larger than the formal sector, and in 2001 contributed almost the same amount (28 per cent) of gross domestic product (GDP) as the formal sector (29 per cent). Also, the report found that women's desire for independence was one of the motivations for their participation in the informal sector (Torero et al., 2006). This indicates that neo-liberal development indicators might not reflect the values of some Jamaican women. Like (Seguino, 2003), Chang (2010) explained development in relation to the public sphere, as he seemed puzzled by the fact that female educational superiority in Jamaica, where women account for 80 per cent of university graduates compared to 20 per cent for men, has not translated into greater participation in the political arena. Similar concern was shared by Vassell (2000) and Bailey (2004) who provided evidence indicating that the high level of education for females in Jamaica has not translated to greater participation in the workplace or the boardroom.

#### *4.2 Exploring Multiple Dimensions of Poverty: Subjective Conceptualisation and Operationalisation*

The formulation of effective poverty alleviation policies requires a clear understanding of the problem by all actors. Among the myriad of definitions of poverty there is some degree of consensus on the dimensions of poverty but the conceptualisation and operationalisation remain areas of contestation (Beckford, 1972, Townsend, 1979, Deosaran, 2000, Narayan, 2000, Laderchi et al., 2003, Sachs, 2005, Benfield, 2010, Na'ndori, 2011, Marks, 2005).

According to Townsend (1979) "individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or are at least widely encouraged or approved, in the societies to which the poor belong. Their resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average individual or family that they are, in effect, excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities" (Townsend, 1979:31). In this way, Townsend highlights the social and material dimensions of poverty based on the norms, values and beliefs of the society or the group. Townsend measured poverty or relative deprivation using a summary index based on the indicators of deprivations along with income (Townsend, 1979). However, Townsend's critics argue that the indicators of deprivation are merely arbitrary choices and not objective indicators (Mack and Lansley, 1985, Piachaud, 1981).

Another definition of poverty is one put forward by the World Bank (2000), which was aimed at improving previous concepts of poverty. The World Bank (2000) refers to poverty as pronounced deprivation in well-being, with deprivation based on economic, social, psychological and physical dimensions (World Bank, 2000). But in the same context the World Bank quickly summarises the various challenges associated with measuring social, psychological and physical dimensions of poverty. These challenges include lack of data, time difference in data collection, conceptual differences, dynamic concepts and inability to capture certain concepts in a single indicator (World Bank, 2000). In effect, income and consumption dimensions remain the preferred measurements of poverty (World Bank, 2012), although they are unable to reveal inequality within the household (World Bank, 2000). Also, the World Bank points out that the "conventional household survey approach does not allow direct measurement of income and consumption poverty among women" (World Bank, 2000: 18).

Conversely, Sen (1999) defines poverty as an individual's capability deprivation, as a lack of multiple freedoms people value and have reason to value. In his seminal work on poverty Sen (1999) elevates the social and psychological dimensions of poverty, with the economic dimension viewed as less significant. Unlike Townsend's measurement and concept of poverty, Sen (1999) argues that the measurement should be constructed based on the individual's state of deprivation and not a normative set of indicators. Similar to Sen's concept, Nussbaum (2003, 1999) conceptualized poverty as deprivation of capabilities, including social, economic, political, psychological and human dimensions. But Nussbaum (2003) differs from Sen (1999) in that she constructed a list of normative capability indicators. Although the literature indicates some consensus on the multidimensional features of poverty such as social, economic and psychological, the verdict is still out as to the most appropriate indicators and the most effective approach to measure poverty. Some argue that it should be measured based on a normative construct such as an index, a list or a poverty-line, while others support a more subjective approach by which the individual dictates the indicators based on her or his lived experience and preferences.

The theoretical debate regarding conceptualisation and operationalization of poverty has raged unabated for decades (Booth 1896, Rowntree 1901, Townsend 1979) and for the most part has been void of the perspective of the poor themselves. Robert Chambers' discontentment with this limitation in the poverty debate (Chambers, 1980) underlies his works on rural development (Chambers, 1980, 1981, 1983, 1987, 1994, 2009). In one of his major work, "Rural Development: Putting the last first" Chambers (1983) chided poverty scholars and practitioners for their narrow concept of poverty and related misguided approach to rural poverty and development. Similarly, (Chambers, 1994a) later called for new approaches and methods of acquiring knowledge about the poor, and posited the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) as an option. The central theme throughout Chambers work is for the poor to participate in and help to define, formulate, implement and evaluate policies, programmes and projects aimed at improving their own lives given the diversity of their realities.

Similarly, women's absence during the decision-making process on issues relating to their lives remains a fundamental concern in feminist discourse (Barriteau, 2003, Moser and Holland, 1997, Norris, 2012, St. Hill, 2003). But the gap in feminist discourse that is relevant to this research is the prescriptive approach often used to include women. Women are often presented as a homogeneous group with universal challenges and solutions. This research is concerned about the absence of rural women at critical stages in the policy process, especially poverty alleviation policies and seeks to better understand this process.

#### *4.3 Poverty Alleviation and Capabilities*

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in and acceptance of the multiple dimensions of poverty as well as subjective indicators to measure wellbeing and human development (Stiglitz et al., 2009, United Nation Development Programme, 2013). However, policy responses to poverty alleviation have not fully embraced or applied this broader approach. This broader approach views poverty as multiple deprivations that require the application of several capabilities. This multi-dimensional approach to poverty alleviation is particularly important for women because, according to enactment theory, "the structures which constrain women interlock with one another; even drastic changes in one area often do not suffice to remove constraints; furthermore, expectations reinforce social norms and enacted structures, so that neither radical structural changes nor radical changes in outlook can in themselves effect equality" (Apter and Garnsey, 1994:28).

Therefore, poverty alleviation strategies for women should not only fulfil their needs but must break these complex structures which permeate women's lives. However, structure is not static, and the current changes, especially in social and economic activities in rural areas (Cramb and Curry, 2012, Koczberski et al., 2012, Rigg and Vandergeest, 2012) could provide the impetus for greater changes that could positively transform the lives of rural women. Deosaran's prescription of poverty alleviation might be plausible. He states, poverty alleviation should be a "viable, sustainable increase in physical capital through the operation of skills, social and psychological capital" (Deosaran, 2000:103-4). Deosaran (2000) further states that the salient feature of alleviation is not simply an increase in one capital but alleviation occurs when that increase is sustained and serves as a catalyst for other capitals. Another perspective of poverty alleviation theorised by Sen (1999) is the expansion of human capabilities aimed at enabling individuals to live and enjoy the quality of life they desire. But the life women desire and the expansion of their capabilities are constrained by the structure. However, three salient features of poverty alleviation for women are drawn from these perspectives. They state that poverty alleviation is a process of transformation, it requires several capabilities, and is dependent on individuals' choices. The interaction between capabilities and rural women's choices in alleviating poverty has not yet been given full attention in public policy research; this study will therefore concentrate on this interaction. The focus will now move to four dimensions of poverty that limit rural women's capability and selected indicators necessary to expand their capability in those four dimensions. The four dimensions of poverty are economic, social, physical and psychological.

Social capabilities appropriate for rural women include access to convenient and affordable day care facilities, flexible before and after school programs and summer programs for children, community connections, and being able to fulfil family responsibilities (Wells, 2002).

Economic capabilities for rural women include being able to earn adequate income, improvement in the low wage structure in rural employment (Wells, 2002).

Physical capabilities for rural women include access to skills training and affordable higher education (Wells, 2002).

Psychological capabilities for rural women include the motivation to work and the ideal of self-

sufficiency is held in high regard (Wells, 2002). Wells (2002) states "the self-sufficiency ethic seems stronger than ideals about the appropriate gender division of labor" (Wells, 2002:251 ). In addition, the sample of rural women in the study viewed welfare as dishonourable and resorted to low income jobs instead of a "free ride" on welfare. However, (Norris, 2012) argues for a more emancipatory approach in enhancing the psychological capabilities of black rural women. She posits that elucidating the agency of rural women through greater participation in decision-making would better address the fundamental structures that limit their psychological capabilities (Norris, 2012). In other words, agency would ensure poverty is analysed from women's perspective; it would challenge rather than accept their subordinate role and interrogate gender divisions of labour, power and control.

#### *4.4 Feminist Critique of Human Development Theory*

The global phenomenon of persistently high levels of poverty, especially among rural women, indicates that not everyone is an 'economic man' and has contributed to scepticism about the neoliberal approach to development (United Nation Development Programme, 2013). Sen (1999) broadened the concept of human development from economic prosperity and theorises development as freedom, which encompasses the expansion of people's capabilities to lead the kind of lives they value and have reason to value (Sen, 1999). Sen's contribution to the theory of human development not only provides a broader framework for additional indicators of development but also emphasises the importance of individual perceptions and values in conceptualizing those indicators and the flexibility to use the necessary resources, assets and capitals to achieve them. In support of Sen's capabilities approach, Nussbaum (2003) accurately outlined that "individuals need differing levels of resources if they are to come up to the same level of capability to function. They also have differing abilities to convert resources into actual functioning (Nussbaum, 2003:34). However, after highlighting the strengths of Sen's argument, Nussbaum (2003) departed from the salient point of acknowledging individual differences and posits the need for a tentative "list of the most central capabilities" to enhance the usefulness of the capabilities approach (Nussbaum, 2003:36). Even though useful in some contexts, this prescriptive approach in feminist discourse has contributed to certain dominant perspectives of women's development to prevail while others remain hidden. For instance, who decides whether political participation and formal employment are indicators of empowerment for rural women, or that cash transfer is more effective to alleviate poverty for rural women in comparison to subsistence farming or access to social services? So, even though theoretically the concept of development has expanded to incorporate non-income indicators, the measurement of development is still confined to normative terms.

Empowerment is often used instead of development in gender and development discourse and usually refers to economic and non-economic indicators such as improvement in women's political participation, educational attainment, economic status and freedom from violence (UN Women, 2013, United Nations, 2012). These normative terms are very useful in assessing women's development across countries and regions with the use of various indices such as Gender Inequality Index, Gender Development Index, Gender Gap Index, Gender Equality Index and Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (United Nation Development Programme, 2013). But they also imply that some development indicators are more important than others and often ignore the nuances of different groups of women, such as rural women, and their complex realities.

The concept of empowerment for women should therefore address multiple dimensions of deprivation in ways that recognize differences and provide the freedom to choose the necessary resources and tools 'to lead the kind of lives they value and have reasons to value'. Similarly, Kabeer (2005) explains empowerment in terms of agency, resources and achievement and summarises empowerment as both the ability to make choices and to act on these choices. Empowerment strategies should focus more on understanding women's concepts and strategies of equality and rights and build on them instead of being consumed with engineering and delivering the equitable and just life to deprived victims. In her critique of empowerment strategies (Mackenzie, 2009)

contends that "neoliberal norms such as individualism, responsibility and economic order have shaped empowerment initiatives to a far greater extent than considerations of local input, marginalised groups, or representation" (Mackenzie, 2009:200). Drawing from her research on women, peace and security in Fiji, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste, Porter (2013) concurs with Cornwall (2007) and states that "even when development policies seek to mainstream gender as a cross-cutting issue, empowerment is often reduced from a complex process of self-realisation, self-actualisation and mobilisation to demand change, to a simple act of transformation bestowed by a transfer of money" (Porter, 2013:4). She calls for new strategies of empowerment that listen to women's voices and concludes that "culturally sensitive empowerment is a powerful ethical goal and a transformative, political practice linked with justice, equality and rights" (Porter, 2013: 12).

#### *4.5 Overview of Case Study: Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) Project*

The Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) Project, formerly the Second National Community Development Project (NCDP2) is a project of the Government of Jamaica (GOJ) and funded by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank). The project began its implementation phase in 2010, with a projected completion date of July 31, 2016. As at 2012, project activities had been conducted in 12 of the 14 parishes, involving approximately 13,000 participants. A gender disaggregation of the participants indicates 70 per cent males and 30 per cent females. According to REDI's Operations Manual Supplement (Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF), 2009), the rationale for this project was the need to stimulate rural economic growth and address the persistently high incidence of poverty in rural Jamaica.

The project's long-term goals are to generate new employment opportunities and increase the levels of income for rural population. The project seeks to fulfil these goals by improving market access for micro and small-scale rural agricultural producers and tourism product and service providers. The success of the project is based on several output indicators. The main indicators are:

- Number of participating rural enterprises that realize an increase in sales;
- Number of participating rural enterprises functioning as registered business entities one year after final disbursement;
- Number of direct jobs created in rural communities receiving project assistance;
- Percent of critical infrastructure subprojects that achieve their expected results for improvement in the value chain; and
- The percentage of female participants was included as an intermediate outcome indicator to ensure that under-represented groups, such as women, are included in the project.

The project utilizes the link between the agriculture sector and tourism sector to fulfil the objectives (Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF), 2009). This approach will apply various strategies, including the provision of enterprise-level financial and technical support; improvement in marketing; assistance in developing market-orient small-scale infrastructure; increased access to technical innovation and business support services; enhanced financial management of rural enterprises; training in technical and environmental skills development; and capacity building of national organizations that are relevant to the sustainability of rural enterprises. The project consists of three components and related sub-sections:

- Rural subprojects in agriculture and tourism;
- National technical assistance and capacity building; and
- Project management.

This research will focus on evaluating the impact of subprojects in agriculture and tourism, which is directed at income generation for beneficiaries. The selected beneficiaries are groups organized by geographic location and economic interest. Some of the prerequisites for group beneficiaries

include:

- Being legally registered as a group;
- Engaged in micro or small businesses with an asset base (excluding land and building) not exceeding the equivalent of US\$10,000 - US\$100,000; and
- An annual turnover of less than the equivalent of US\$125,000.

## 5. Significance

This research is located at the intersection of the broader discourses on poverty, gender and rural development. This study will be conducted in Jamaica, and will provide country-specific evidence to debates - among professionals, policy-makers, development experts, academic scholars, activists, politicians and governments - on the role of context-specific solutions to the global phenomenon of rural poverty. This research project is significant at the level of academic discourse as well as policy-making at the national level regarding social and economic development in Jamaica.

There are many important contributions from economists, sociologists, feminists, development specialists and policy analysts on this broad topic. However, this study is specifically placed in the context of rural women in Jamaica. Given the multidisciplinary nature of this investigation, it is expected to add valuable knowledge in the critical social science domain of gender and poverty. The relevance of this research also extends to the debates on alternative approaches to the complementarities of women's empowerment with the concept of capabilities approach to development; the equitable and democratic governance and effective implementation of poverty alleviation interventions; and the broader sociological context regarding the various frames of reference individuals use to construct their realities in conditions of deprivation.

Globally, there is a small number of studies on the psychological dimension of poverty and rural women, especially in the context of alleviation strategies. The research also attempts to explore how rural women combine and sequence their resources and capitals to achieve empowerment. Through the application of the theoretical concepts of frames of reference and capabilities approach in the context of poverty alleviation strategies of rural women, this study strives to generate new theoretical and practical knowledge.

## 6. Research Method

To address the objectives of this thesis which is aimed at evaluating the impact of the REDI project on rural women, a three-stage fieldwork approach will be conducted in Jamaica (outlined below). This thesis will apply a mixture of qualitative and quantitative research methods aimed at capturing, as best as possible, a holistic view of how rural women understand and experience poverty and their perspective of the impact of the REDI project.

The main purpose of applying a mixed methods approach in a research, instead of a single method, such as quantitative or qualitative, is to provide a better understanding of the research problems (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007). Oakley (1999) argues that the goal of selecting research methods is not necessarily to debate the advantages and disadvantages of one over the other but rather to "consider how best to match methods to research questions, and to find ways of integrating a range of methods in carrying out socially useful inquiries" (Oakley, 1999:166). Like Oakley, other authors (Laderchi et al., 2003, Williams, 1999) propose that the most suitable research methods are those that elucidate women's voices and experiences.

**6.1 Unit of analysis:** The unit of analysis is female participants of the REDI project. The usual approach to understanding poverty in Jamaica is at the household level (Planning Institute of Jamaica and Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2009a, Benfield, 2010). However, this study will investigate poverty at the individual level. This is based on the awareness that the impact of poverty alleviation strategies is better understood at the individual level rather than the household level Deosaran (2000). A study at the household level might not be able to provide suitable subjective

details from which to draw inference for poverty alleviation and policy-making at the macro level (Arrow, 1994).

**6.2 Sample selection:** This study will apply a purposive sampling technique to select a sample of female participants of the REDI project who have completed their activities within the specified time period. The last date of their participation in the project should be no later than two (2) years before the start of primary data collection. This lapse in time between project completion and data collection is to make allowance for program impact while controlling for accuracy of personal information, which can be lost or tarnished by the passage of time. A sample of at least 90 female participants (30 participants from each parish) will be selected from projects completed on or after August 1, 2012 (projected start date of first phase of fieldwork is August 1, 2014). The female participants will be selected from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and include at least 50 per cent female-heads of household from the parishes of St. Elizabeth, St. Mary and Trelawny. These parishes were selected because they are the poorest parishes, according to the latest JSLC Parish Report 2008 (Planning Institute of Jamaica and Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2013). The purposive sampling technique will be used because it is suitable for collecting data from diverse and knowledgeable sources while taking into consideration the limitation of available research resources.

**6.3 Methods of data collection:** This study will collect both secondary and primary data. The secondary data (qualitative and quantitative) will be collected through literature review of books, journals articles, REDI project documents, organizations' annual and periodic reports, poverty reduction policy documents, national socio-economic surveys and plans, among others. A three-stage approach to data collection will be undertaken and each stage is briefly described below:

The first stage includes:

In-depth interviews and focus group discussions with female beneficiaries to better understand the socio-economic and cultural context of rural women's lives. The contextual information will cover areas such as sources of income, employment, demographics, control and allocation of resources, illnesses, health, housing, cultural practices, natural disasters, environmental issues, self-esteem, satisfaction, personal independence, among others.

The second stage includes:

An evaluation framework will be developed to assess the impact of the REDI project on overcoming poverty among rural women. The framework will be based on the contextual information gathered in the first stage of data collection. This evaluation framework will aim to assess improvements in the social, economic, physical and psychological capabilities of the rural women as a result of the REDI project. Below is a preliminary list of indicators under the four capabilities that will guide the data collection.

a) **Indicators to measure economic capability:**

- Sources of income;
- Income security;
- Ability to overcome shocks to assets.

b) **Indicators to measure social capability:**

- Freedom from crime and violence against person and property;
- Being able to access and benefit from social and kinship networks;
- Improvement in quality and access to social services.

c) **Indicators to measure physical capability:**

- Being physically healthy;
- Being able to live without the presence of hunger and have adequate living conditions; and

- Ability to manage and overcome environmental shocks and maintain environmental integrity.
- d) **Indicators to measure psychological capability:**
- Self-determination (agency and empowerment),
  - Meaning of life; and
  - Feeling of well-being and satisfaction.

The third stage includes:

The collection of primary data from REDI project personnel and World Bank officers mainly for the purpose of triangulation. These informants are included because they have critical knowledge about the formulation and implementation of the REDI project.

**6.4 Data Analysis and Presentation:** Analysis of the findings will include thematic analysis, cross-case analysis and pattern-matching mainly to identify similarities and differences across the three groups of participants. The findings will be presented in written and audio-visual formats and aided by tables, charts, graphs and pictures. Such diversity of data analysis and presentation is aimed at uncovering and interpreting the realities of poverty alleviation and REDI's impact, for the selected sample of rural women, with integrity, accuracy and as complete as possible.

## 7. Ethical Issues

This is a study on human subjects and therefore ethics approval is required. Therefore, as stipulated by the Curtin University research ethics guidelines, informed consent will be sought from each key informant and agreement recorded (written or audio), as well as permission to record information via photography and audio-visual formats.

## 8. Facilities and Resources:

No resources or facilities, beyond those outlined in the Essential Facilities for Higher Degree by Research Students document, are required to complete this study.

## 9. Data Storage

The data storage provisions are outlined in the attached Research Data Management Plan and meet the Curtin University Research Data and Primary Materials Policy.

## 10. Time Schedule

Tasks	Year/Semester
Review of literature	2013 - 2016
Submit Candidacy Proposal and Ethics Clearance	2013/ 2
Prepare action plan, information guidelines and checklist for fieldwork	2013/ 2
Prepare 1 st draft of literature review	2013/2 - 2014/1
Conduct 1 st period of field work (6 months)	2014/2
Organise, compile primary data collected and conduct preliminary analysis	2014 - 2015
Conduct 2 <sup>nd</sup> period of field work and begin final data analysis (3 months)	2015/2
Prepare 1 <sup>st</sup> draft of dissertation	2016/1
Complete final draft of dissertation	2016/2
Submit final draft of dissertation	2016/2
Prepare and submit annual progress report	2013/4/5/6

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